

Historic District FAQ

Related Questions

How do I obtain a Certificate of Appropriateness for proposed work?

1. Determine if your property is within the boundaries of the ES Historic District.
2. Fill out an application at City Hall.
3. The application will tell you what supporting materials you need. (Current color photos of all four sides of the property are always required.) The HDC members must have enough information to clearly visualize the results of the proposed work.
4. If possible, attend the HDC meeting at which your application will be heard in case there are questions. This serves as a Public Hearing on your application.
5. The Commission may approve, disapprove or defer your application pending further information. HDC may also approve your application contingent on certain conditions being met before issuance.
6. If work is approved, you will be issued a CofA that you present to the Building Official when you get your Building Permit. If no Building Permit is required for your work, then you just post the CofA where visible to the public on your work site.

How does the ES Historic District Commission affect my property?

The ES Historic District Commission must issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for ANY EXTERIOR work done on ALL properties within the boundaries of the district.

How does the Eureka Springs Historic District Commission make decisions?

Decisions are based on two documents: U.S. Secretary of the Interior Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Eureka Springs Historic District Guidelines.

Both are available on-line at the City of Eureka Springs web site and in print at City Hall. You may consult a copy at City Hall or purchase one for \$6.

How long do I have to complete work approved by HDC?

Work must be completed within 12 months. An expired CofA may be extended via Administrative Approval for one 6-month period provided there have been no changes to the approved plan. Work begun and not completed within this time will be considered to be in violation without a new CofA.

Is all work considered in the same way?

There are three levels of project work:

Level I Maintenance: Minor impact projects such as roofing or roof repair, painting and other repairs. Level I projects with no material or color changes may be given Administrative Approval at City Hall.

Level I Signs: All signs must have HDC approval and conform to Municipal Code.

Level II Medium: Impact projects involving changes to the building or site that do not increase or decrease the shape, contour or size of the building or site features.

Level III Major: Impact projects involving changes to the size or volume of a building, alterations in the contour or the roofline, changes to the footprint of the building, demolition. Applicants must post a conspicuous sign on property at least 10 days before the meeting. Signs are provided by City Hall.

Is obtaining a Certificate of Appropriateness a legal requirement?

Yes. Eureka Springs Municipal Code Chapter 2.64 pertains to the ES Historic District. You must have a CofA before a Building Permit will be issued.

Is there a fee for the Certificate of Appropriateness?

No there is not. There may, however, be a fee for your Building Permit.

What are the benefits of a Local Historic District?

1. Protects the investments of owners and residents of historic properties.
2. Encourages better quality design.
3. Helps the environment.
4. Educations benefits are same as those derived from any historic preservation effort.
5. Results in a positive economic impact from tourism.
6. Enhances business recruitment potential.
7. Provides social and psychological benefits.

(from Maintaining Community Character: How to Establish a Local Historic District by Pratt Cassity.

What are the boundaries of the Eureka Springs Historic District?

The boundaries of the district were set at the Eureka Springs city limits when the district was created in 1970. Most of the city is still included. Please check the map or contact City Hall if there is a question of inclusion.

What if I do exterior work in the Historic District without a Certificate of Appropriateness?

Without approval, the work will be considered a misdemeanor with fines up to \$500, with each day the violation continues constituting a separate offense. If the work also does not have a Building Permit, fines may also be levied and the cost of the Permit may be doubled. The Building Official is the Law Enforcement Officer for the HDC. He is empowered to issue citations as is any other law enforcement officer. Violations may also be addressed through sworn affidavits for criminal charges.

What if I do not like the decision of the Historic District Commission?

If the HDC does not feel that your proposed work meets the national standards and/or local guidelines, they will try to work with you to find a solution suitable to you and the HDC. If this is not possible, you may appeal the decision to the Circuit Court of Carroll County.

What if my plans change while I am working on my property?

You MUST contact the commission staff if you are deviating from your approved Cof A in any way. Otherwise your work will be considered unapproved and will be subject to the same penalties as if no CofA was issued. Major changes may require another application to the HDC.

What is the Eureka Springs Historic District Commission?

The ESHDC has seven commissioners. Each is appointed by the Mayor and approved by City Council. Each serves a three year term on a rotating basis. The HDC is supported by staff at City Hall.

What is the Eureka Springs Historic District?

In 1970, Eureka Springs became the first district in Arkansas to be placed on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1978, the Historic District Commission was created by ordinance #1047. Eureka Springs is also a Certified Local Government, meaning our HDC has been certified by the State Historic Preservation Officer as having met all required federal and state standards. CLG status also entitles us to a regular flow of grant money for preservation projects, technical assistance, and training for CLG staff and commissioners.

When are applications for a Certificate of Appropriateness due?

Applications must be submitted twelve working days before the HDC meeting. This is usually at noon on the first and third Thursdays. (The agenda is published in the Eureka Springs Times-Echo as a legal notice of Public Hearing.) Supporting materials for the application are due by noon Monday of the meeting week. A schedule is located on the city's web site or available at City Hall.

When does the Historic District Commission meet?

The ES HDC meets at 6:00 p.m. on the first and third Wednesdays in the Council Chambers of City Hall, located in the Western District Courthouse, second floor, 44 South Main Street.

Why is there a design review process by the Eureka Springs Historic District Commission?

The goal of the Eureka Springs Historic District Commission is preserve and protect the architectural and natural beauty of Eureka Springs. The precious shared heritage of our town cannot be found anywhere else in America. It cannot be duplicated or faked. If the exteriors of our historic structures are altered without thought to their original style or our architectural heritage, we have stolen from our community's future. ESHDC strives to take the long view, working with our current citizens as partners in this community that is situated in a timeless intersection of past, present and future.

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